

Health Risks in Indiana from Oil and Gas Air Pollution

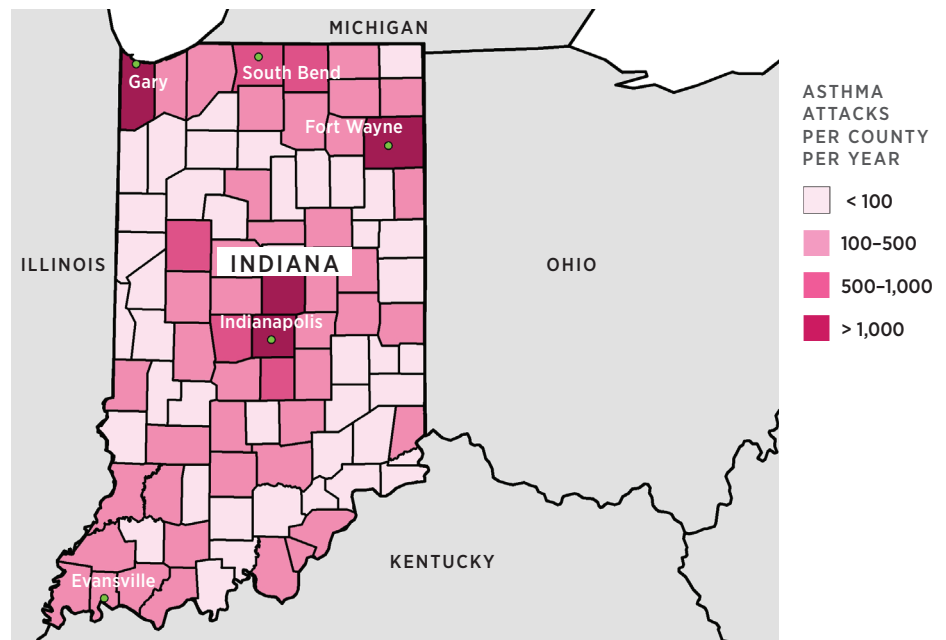
In the United States the oil and gas industry dumps millions of tons of air pollutants into our air each year. This mix of pollutants includes methane, a very potent climate pollutant, and enormous amounts of toxic air pollutants and pollutants that cause ozone smog pollution. Toxic air pollutants cause cancer and other diseases, while ozone smog can cause a variety of health problems, such as asthma attacks and worsening the effects of bronchitis and emphysema.

While these pollutants cause health problems in areas with oil and gas booms and intense activity, they also cause problems in other regions, as air pollution travels across the country. **This fact sheet examines how oil and gas air pollution hurts the health of people in Indiana.**

Pollution from oil and gas sites across the nation generates ozone smog, which is damaging the health of Indiana residents:

- Over 19,000 Indiana children per year will suffer asthma attacks due to ozone from this industry (see Figure 1).
- These kids live across the state—oil and gas air pollution causes over 1,600 asthma attacks per year in the metropolitan counties of northwest Indiana, over 1,200 attacks per year in the Fort Wayne area, and almost 6,200 asthma attacks per year in the Indianapolis area.
- Unfortunately, no county in the state escapes from the ozone pollution

FIGURE 1
Ozone-induced Childhood Asthma Attacks Attributed to Oil and Gas Emissions in Indiana Counties



produced by the oil and gas industry.

- Adults are also harmed by ozone exposure, with almost 38,000 person-days of restricted activity in Indiana linked to breathing higher levels of ozone.

Air pollution from the oil and gas industry also includes hazardous, toxic air pollutants, such as benzene, formaldehyde, and acetaldehyde. According to EPA's data for 2011, over 370 tons of hazardous toxic air pollution—benzene, formaldehyde, and acetaldehyde and other compounds—were emitted from almost 7,400 oil and gas sites in Indiana.

- 103,000 people in Indiana live within a half-mile of active oil and gas operations.

Toxic air pollution emissions can directly affect the health of individuals living adjacent to sources.

- Children are especially vulnerable to air pollution exposure and 55 schools in Indiana are located within a half-mile of oil and gas operations.

The bottom line: across Indiana and neighboring states, air pollution from the oil and gas industry affects young and old people. **Hoosiers need strong federal standards for air releases from the oil and gas industry, such as EPA's standards for new wells and equipment and the Bureau of Land Management's Waste Rules for wells on Federal lands.**